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Let us hope that before long students of the Tudor-Stuart drama will be provided with a complete and definitive edition of the plays of our "prose Shakespeare." Toward the production of such an edition Miss Bates's admirable study will contribute much.

JOSEPH QUINCY ADAMS

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

A Literary Middle English Reader. Edited by ALBERT S. COOK.
Boston: Ginn & Co., 1915. Pp. xxviii+554.

As frankly avowed by the title, this Middle English reader differs from all its predecessors in proposing to furnish a body of texts, not for linguistic, but for literary, study. The object of the editor is to make accessible and intelligible a diversified group of poetical or prose works of each of the chief types of mediaeval vernacular English literature: romances, tales, chronicles, stories of travel, religious and didactic pieces, illustrations of life and manners, translations, lyrics, and plays. The material is classified under these headings, and even under each heading it is not arranged according to dialect or chronology.

In order to reduce to a minimum the apparatus which must intervene between student and text, the linguistic information is reduced to eight pages on pronunciation, inflection, and dialects. There are no linguistic notes, and there is no separate glossary, but the difficult words or forms are defined in footnotes, with a reference number from word to note. The texts on the whole are emended conservatively, and the manuscript readings are given in footnotes. At the head of each selection is the essential information about date, manuscripts, and editions; frequently a statement of problems or discussions; a summary of the whole work (if only an extract is printed); and some characterization of the literary value of the selection. On pages xxvi-xxviii is printed a short but admirably selected list of "Useful Books for the Study of Middle English."

Probably there are no two persons familiar with Middle English literature who would agree on the choice of material for such a volume; and in any event neither adverse criticism nor positive suggestion could now alter the contents. On the whole, the selections give an adequate idea of the kinds of people in England to whom literature in English appealed between 1200 and 1500; a fair view of the diverse forms that that literature assumed; and some knowledge of the skill, and of the lack of it, exhibited by English poets and prose-writers of that period. Chaucer is drawn on rather heavily; Gower is represented; extracts are given from *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*, from the *Pearl*, and from *Piers the Plowman*; five plays are printed entire. The book gives us a body of fresh and unhackneyed material, duplicating next to nothing of the contents of other books of the same

character. Whatever of striking literary importance is not included (for example, *The Debate between the Body and the Soul*) is accessible in other generally used readers, such as Emerson, or Morris and Skeat.

The editor's effort briefly to characterize mediaeval vernacular literature is not especially felicitous, particularly the analogy with Gothic architecture. In the case of Middle English literature two considerations should be emphasized. First, before the year 1300 practically all the persons in England who read (or listened to) learned or polite literature demanded literature in Latin or in French. Two consequences ensued: most of the vernacular literature that existed probably was of a low standard, appealing, as it did, only to the uncultivated classes; and very little vernacular literature got written down, for parchment, vellum, and scribal labor were fairly expensive, putting the product beyond the reach of the "vernacular public." Since there was no market for manuscripts in the vernacular, few such manuscripts were produced. Therefore few of the works in English that did exist before 1300 have been preserved.

Second, in the case of that Middle English literature that has survived from both the early and the late periods, we do not confine our study to the best or to the pure literature, but we have overgenerously applied the term "literature" to practically every extant document written within the period in the English language. Some of these works are not "literature" at all. They were produced through a period of three hundred years, for all sorts of purposes and publics, with constantly changing technique, by writers who exhibited skill and power in varying degrees.

It would of course be absurd to imply that the technique of dramatic and narrative forms, for example, has not changed greatly since 1500. But any attempt to characterize such changes briefly, as well as any attempt to describe briefly the other and greater differences between mediaeval and modern literature as a whole, is in the nature of the case utterly impossible.

There are a few glosses in the book that might be improved: *bin erende to bede* (13. 10) = "to announce thy message;" *also* (16. 3) = "thus;" *anonder* (16. 27) = "one under;" *were* (17. 1) = "wear;" *let* (19. 15) = "left;" *everi del* (26. 25) = "every bit," i.e., every bit of their talk was about Havelok; *red* (31. 15) = "help;" *unkyndelike* (33. 4) = "unnaturally;" *al so, al so* (33. 7) = "as, as;" *let* (39.4) = "caused (to);" *for the nones* (47. 22) = "expressly" (see Hinckley, *Notes on Chaucer*, p. 28); *lak* (199. 10) = "fault," "blame."

Some emendations are unnecessary: MS *with* (24. 19) = *wiht*, "strong;" MS *was werse* (27. 25) needs no transposition; *[and]* (30. 15) is not required.

The best text in print has not always been followed. The extracts from the "Bestiary" are based on Mätzner, *Altenglische Sprachproben*, though

Morris has a more recent and much more accurate print of the manuscript in the *Old English Miscellany* (E.E.T.S., 49). An inspection of the latter would have enabled the editor to avoid the errors in footnotes 12, 13, 19, p. 318; 16, p. 319; 21, p. 320.

THOMAS A. KNOTT

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit; Euphues & his England. By JOHN LYLY. Edited by MORRIS W. CROLL and HARRY CLEMONS. London: George Routledge & Sons; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1916. Pp. lxiv+473.

Professor Croll in his new edition of *Euphues*—with a modernized text prepared largely by Mr. Clemons—succeeds through the introduction and notes in throwing fresh light on this much-studied pioneer work of the English Renaissance. In the notes many new sources and influences, especially of English proverbial lore, are traced for particular passages. In the introduction adequate attention is for the first time called to the influence exerted on the Euphuistic type of style by mediaeval rhetoric with its *schemata*, and thus an excellent corrective is furnished to previous studies, which have recently focused attention too exclusively on the contribution of humanism to Euphuism. Such a treatment lays the basis for a better understanding of the fact that Lyly, like Spenser, contributed to the outburst of creative literature in England by aiding in the amalgamation of mediaeval culture with the newly revived classical culture, and particularly by following in the wake of Italy, where already the amalgamation had produced a literature in harmony with the social life of the period. I have urged elsewhere that Lyly's plays show a modification of court-of-love allegory by Platonism and of mediaeval pageantry by a new romantic classicism, and that even the didactic *Anatomy of Wit* is typical of the combined influences at work in the writings of Lyly (*Mod. Lang. Notes*, XXVII, 147–52; *Mod. Phil.*, XIV, 483–84). Professor Croll here emphasizes sufficiently the mediaevalism in the style of *Euphues*. But his emphasis of this tends to obscure the fact that the mediaeval tradition was practically absorbed in the new humanism. In drawing an unwarrantably sharp distinction between mediaeval and humanistic ideals of rhetoric, he neglects to point out how often a leading humanist like Erasmus overemphasizes rhetoric and recommends the more famous mediaeval rhetorics for study. In stressing the hostility of the humanists to the *schemata*, he does not trace the various degrees of purism among the men influenced by the New Learning or point out that his best exemplar, Wilson, belonged to a group of admirers of the simplicity of Demosthenes' style. In citing Ascham, another of this group, Professor